

VZCZCXYZ0009
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #1544/01 3050959
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 310959Z OCT 08
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0238
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8689
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0136

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 001544

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. AND CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused October 31 news coverage on the detention of former National Security Council Secretary-General Chiou I-jen Thursday for alleged embezzlement of government diplomatic funds; for the upcoming visit to Taiwan by China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) Chairman Chen Yunlin and the planned talks between ARATS and Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation; and on the new lottery winners in Taiwan Thursday. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" hailed President Ma Ying-jeou's "general orientation which upholds peaceful interaction across the Taiwan Strait," calling it a move that is "most welcomed by the United States and will not irritate China." An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," however, scorned President Ma's selection of former Vice President Lien Chan as Taiwan's envoy to the APEC summit. The article said "one could even suggest that Lien was perhaps Beijing's -- and not Taipei's -- choice." End summary.

A) "Arrangement Should Be Made for [DPP] Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen to Meet with [ARATS Chairman] Chen Yunlin"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] editorialized (10/31):

"... Relations across the Taiwan Strait should have moved from confrontation to harmony since China's relations with the United States have improved. Interactions between Beijing and Washington have accelerated in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001; the [current] financial tsunami has all the more highlighted the intimate interdependent relationship between the two countries in terms of trade and finances. At this moment, the United States is keen to see cross-Strait relations thawing, so that they will not sabotage its grand global strategy.

"As a result, it is the most sensible course on which Taiwan's grand strategy is moving, along with the international trend, from pro-U.S. and anti-communist to the direction of pro-U.S. and befriending China. Such a direction, which is most welcomed by the United States and will not irritate China, is the best status for Taiwan. President Ma's general orientation, which upholds peaceful interaction across the Taiwan Strait, is absolutely accurate and should be given full support.

"Current cross-Strait relations are at their most harmonious state in the past 16 years. [China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait Chairman] Chen Yunlin's attitude also demonstrated his respect for Taiwan's status and for the Taiwan people, so there is no reason why [Taiwan] should object to his visit. The establishment of a friendly relationship requires fine and subtle engineering, and systematized and regular negotiations between officials [of both sides] are a necessary means to facilitate bilateral relations. Chen's visit [to Taiwan] is the necessary and only way [for both sides] to construct a negotiation platform. The Taiwan government should make the best preparations it can [for Chen's upcoming visit] in an attempt to stabilize cross-Strait relations and eliminate miscalculation and accidental eruption of

hostilities. ..."

B) "Mr. Lien Goes to Lima via Beijing"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (10/31):

"The Presidential Office announced with much fanfare on Wednesday that former Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) chairman Lien Chan would represent President Ma Ying-jeou at the APEC leaders summit in Peru next month. The trumpets were out because, as a former vice president, Lien will be the highest-ranking former official to represent Taiwan at the annual forum. ... In selecting Lien, the Presidential Office clearly resorted to the safest option, as there was little chance that China would reject him given his Machiavellian past. Lien is China's man. He has shown on many occasions in the past that he is all too willing to toe the line of Beijing's united-front policy and denigrate Taiwan's sovereignty. It was Lien who put Taiwan's sovereignty on its current slippery slope when in 2005 he undermined the authority of the Chen government by traveling to China and meeting Chinese officials. ...

"One could even suggest that Lien was perhaps Beijing's - and not Taipei's - choice. Given the shady communication channels that exist between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party, it would not be surprising if the two parties reached a secret deal on Taipei's representation. ... Lien's attendance in Lima will no doubt be spun as the latest indicator of China's benevolence, but in reality most people couldn't care less who represents Ma at this inconsequential annual gabfest. They care more about Taiwan's entry to the WHO or the UN, goals that look like a lost cause following China's outright dismissal of Ma's 'pragmatic' UN bid last month. The Ma administration may have perfected the art of taking China's snubs

and spinning them in a positive fashion, but as last Saturday's 600,000-strong anti-government protest showed, people's reserves of goodwill for Ma and his cross-strait strategy are at a critical low."

YOUNG